REMARKS

Favorable entry and reconsideration of this application is respectfully requested in view of the following remarks.

Claims 2-8, and 13 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,191,236 to Roby et al. (herein referred to as "Roby I"). This rejection is respectfully traversed in view of the amendments above.

Nowhere does Roby I disclose a process for manufacturing a monofilament suture wherein the monofilament is drawn through a third oven maintained at a temperature of about 130°C at a draw ratio of about 0.7:1 to about 0.8:1. Roby I fails to teach a third draw at a temperature above 120°C. As noted by the Examiner, "Roby I teaches a third oven temperature of 50-120°C" [see page 4, lines 3-4 of the Final Office Action dated December 17, 2009]. Thus, Roby I does not implicitly or explicitly disclose a process which includes a third drawing step performed at a temperature of about 130°C.

In addition, Roby I also fails to disclose a third draw ratio of about 0.7:1 to about 0.8:1. Rather, Roby I discloses a process in which the third draw ratio is 0.96:1 to 0.98:1. Contrary to the Examiner's interpretation, the third draw ratios of Roby I and the present application can not be simply generalized to any draw ratio under 1:1, especially in view of the fact that the third draw ratio of the present application is performed at a higher temperature, i.e., about 130°C, then the broad range of Roby I, i.e., 50-120 °C. Thus Roby I discloses a third draw maintained at a temperature lower than 130°C and at third draw ratio significantly higher than about 0.7:1 to about 0.8:1. Therefore Roby I alone fails to anticipate or render obvious any of claims 2-8 and 13.

For at least the foregoing reasons, Applicant respectfully submits that independent claims 2 and 13 patentably define over Roby I and are therefore in condition for allowance. Since claims 3-8 depend from claim 2, and contain all the features of claim 2, Applicant respectfully submits that these claims are also in condition for allowance.

Accordingly, the withdrawal of the rejection under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) with respect to claims 2-8 and 13, and the allowance thereof are respectfully requested.

Claims 9-11, and 14 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Roby I as applied to claims 2-8 and 13 above, and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,235,869 to Roby et al. (hereinafter referred to as "Roby II"). This rejection is also respectfully traversed.

Since claims 9-11, and 14 depend from claims 2 and 13, and contain all the features of claims 2 and 13, Applicant respectfully submits that Roby I fails to render claims 9-11, and 14 as obvious for the same reasons provided above regarding claims 2 and 13.

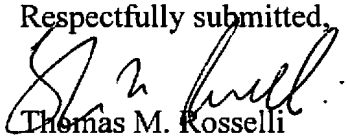
Roby II fails to cure the deficiencies of Roby I. As noted by the Examiner, "Roby II is cited for its disclosure of relaxing a monofilament suture during annealing" [see page 4, lines 23-24 of the Final Office Action dated December 17, 2009]. Thus Roby II is not cited to cure the present deficiencies of Roby I. In fact Roby II fails to disclose a process for manufacturing a monofilament suture wherein the monofilament is drawn through a third oven maintained at a temperature of about 130°C at a draw ratio of about 0.7:1 to about 0.8:1. Rather, Roby II discloses a process for manufacturing a monofilament suture which includes a third oven maintained at a temperature of about 90°C to about 110°C at a draw ratio of about 0.85:1 to about 1.05:1. Similar to Roby I, Roby II discloses a third draw maintained at a lower temperature and higher draw ratio than the third draw of the present application. Thus, Roby I and Roby II, alone or in any combination, fail to render obvious claims 9-11, and 14.

Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that the rejection of claims 9-11, and 14 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Roby I as applied to claims 2-8 and 13 above, and further in view of Roby II should be withdrawn.

Should the Examiner believe that a telephone interview may facilitate prosecution of this application, the Examiner is respectfully requested to telephone Applicant's undersigned representative at the number indicated above.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, reconsideration of the application and allowance of claims 2-11, 13 and 14 is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,



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